

## **Army Modernization: A Sense of Urgency To Get It Right, General Says**

By Ann Roosevelt, Defense Daily, 07 Jul 09

The Army is working to revise the concept and architecture of its modernization plans by the fall in the wake of the Defense Department's late June cancellation of the Future Combat System (FCS) program as it had been.

"We've been a part of a multi-faceted strategy to do all this and do it with a sense of urgency," Lt. Gen. Stephen Speakes, deputy chief of staff (G-8), said at a July 1 Pentagon roundtable. "A sense of urgency that's born out of the fact that we have soldiers in combat today. They're going to be in combat for the foreseeable future. We need to ensure they're supported."

The sense of urgency also concerns the need to incorporate approved DoD changes in the fiscal year 2011 budget.

By canceling the FCS program for a new structure, Defense Secretary Robert Gates did not discourage ground force modernization, but he did emphasize getting it right.

For the service, support by Pentagon leaders and Congress is vital to keep a viable modernization program and to receive funding to accomplish those goals.

The FCS program had its critics from inception. The service sees the need for support from the public, Congress and the Pentagon leadership for modernization.

The service created Task Force 120 to analyze the past, current knowledge and to point a way toward the future with a report after Labor Day to Army leadership that will then be briefed to the Office of the Secretary of Defense leadership.

A fundamental challenge is how affordable modernization will be, Speakes said. "Affordable solutions will be fielded and unaffordable solutions won't be."

When TF 120 completes work, the Army must ensure that a fiscal strategy supports the overall desired capabilities and there is a concept, a prioritized set of requirements that is linked to an actual, affordable funding solution, Speakes said.

"It's very clear to us, the Army is not going to get more money," Speakes said. "What the Army has got to do is take existing funds and see how we make all this work. We're very concerned about the ability to sustain Army modernization funding that we need."

There is and has been concern on Capitol Hill that the Army lacks definition and specifics in the larger sense, beyond the FCS program.

"We can't see an erosion of the Army's fiscal authority as we go through this very important review of our program," he said.

Lt. Gen. Ross Thompson, principal military deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, said, "I would submit to you that the overarching premise is that the Army does need a ground combat vehicle and does need to continue to modernize, and that takes funding support. If the funding gets eroded in the FY '10 budget or gets eroded in the out years, then the Army's going to have less of an ability to modernize and the Army is involved in two major theaters of war right now and there's a need for a continued modernization."

Funding issues also include concerns about the funds required to terminate the manned ground vehicle portion of FCS that are undetermined as they are in negotiation, fees likely to be in the "hundreds of millions," Thompson has said several times.

The president's FY '10 budget requested \$426.8 million of a total \$2.9 billion for contract termination fees associated with the eight manned ground vehicles in the program. However, the House Armed Services Committee report on the FY '10 authorization bill said \$744.6 million in fiscal year 2009 funds for FCS manned ground vehicles (MGV) had not been executed as of April 30. As well, the MGV portion of the FCS was terminated. "Therefore, the committee believes that unexecuted fiscal year 2009 funds will be more than adequate to cover any possible termination costs to the government, and that the fiscal year 2010 request for additional termination funds is not justified," the committee report said.

However, Thompson said, "There is not adequate money to pay the cancellation fees and do the work that needs to be done as we restructure this program." If funds needed to pay the termination fees are removed from the FY '10 budget, "that's work we won't get done...it will impact our ability to maintain the schedule and do the early spinouts."

That means new capabilities, early spin-outs from the FCS program slated for infantry brigade combat teams could be delayed.

TF 120 is working to an Aug. 31 deadline to get the report to Army leaders. The tight timelines are to allow the Army and OSD to adjust the FY '11 budget that leaves DoD in mid-December for the White House Office of Management and Budget.

All the work is essentially irrelevant if it doesn't become part of the budget cycle, both generals said.

Speakes said the department is often criticized for being slow, yet taxpayers want a considered solution. The Army is trying to be relevant, timely and well thought out, he said.

"We're deadly serious about getting this as right as we can," Speakes said.